



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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KEEP FOOD SAFE IF THE POWER GOES OUT! *County Environmental Health Offers Tips to Keep Food Safe*

With potential electricity outages due to the current fires facing San Diego County, the County Department of Environmental Health offers the following food safety tips to prevent foodborne illness at both homes and retail food businesses:

- Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed. Keep potentially hazardous foods, such as meat or poultry, chilled to 41°F or less. Do not place hot or unrefrigerated foods in the refrigerator once the power has gone out as it will raise the temperature inside the unit. Chill food with ice baths as needed. If the freezer is not full, group packages together so they will retain the cold more effectively.
- If necessary use block ice, bag ice or dry ice for supplemental cooling. Be especially careful when handling dry ice and do not touch it directly with bare skin or inhale the fumes directly. Discard any thawed food that has risen to room temperature and remained there for two (2) hours or more.
- If the freezer is not full, group packages together so they will retain the cold more effectively. Keep meat and poultry items separated from other foods so if they begin to thaw, their juices will not drip on to other foods.
- If a restaurant or market suffers fire-related damage, it must close immediately and be inspected before reopening. If there is a power outage, the food facility must close.

When in doubt, throw it out!

When the power comes back on, all potentially hazardous foods must be evaluated for proper temperatures. Bacteria can multiply rapidly on potentially hazardous foods that have been at room temperature for more than 2 hours. Thawed foods that are at 41°F or below should be used as soon as possible. Do not refreeze thawed foods.

Additional food safety information can be found on the Internet at www.foodsafety.gov and selecting Consumer Advice, Disaster Assistance. Permitted food facilities should contact the Food and Housing Division at (619) 338-2379 or fhdutyeh@sdcounty.ca.gov if their outage lasts more than four hours.

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